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June 17, 2025

The Honorable Curtis VanderWall
Chair
House Committee on Health Policy
124 North Capitol Avenue, Room 519
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: MISAM's Support for HB 4498, Syringe Service Programs

Dear Chair VanderWall,

On behalf of the Michigan Society of Addiction Medicine (MISAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Michigan who specialize in the prevention, treatment, and recovery from addiction, thank you for your work to address the overdose epidemic in our state. **We write today to express our support for HB 4498.** This legislation would improve our state's response to overdose epidemic by streamlining the certification of syringe service programs (SSPs) and decriminalizing the possession of materials distributed by these programs.

Michigan is still facing an unprecedented overdose crisis. SSPs are a proven tool to improve public health and reduce overdose deaths.ⁱ As a primary function, SSPs distribute safe materials to people who use drugs. These materials include syringes, medical supplies, and naloxone. SSPs also provide educational resources and linkages to treatment for individuals with addiction. Indeed, research has indicated that those who participate in SSPs are more likely to seek treatment and stop using drugs as a result.ⁱⁱ

SSPs are linked to other positive public health outcomes. For example, SSPs greatly reduce the spread of bloodborne infections, such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).^{iii iv} Additionally, SSPs provide safe disposal for used syringes,^v promoting community safety. Further, SSPs often partner with local law enforcement to distribute naloxone to help reduce fatal overdoses in the community.^{vi} Finally, studies suggest that SSPs do not impact violent crime rates in surrounding areas.

In fact, research has shown that there is no difference in crime rates between neighborhoods with SSPs when compared to neighborhoods without them.^{vii viii}

Simply put, allowing SSPs to more easily expand into communities would reduce overdoses and save lives. **As such, MISAM is proud to support HB 4498 and urge that this committee favorably report the legislation.** Thank you for considering our perspective on this issue.

Sincerely,



Ismael D. Yanga, MD, FASAM[`]
President, Michigan Society of Addiction Medicine

CC: The Honorable Carrie Rheingans

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *Syringe Services Programs*. cdc.gov. <https://www.cdc.gov/syringe-services-programs/php/index.html>

ⁱⁱ Aspinall, E. J., Nambiar, D., Goldberg, D. J., Hickman, M., Weir, A., Van Velzen, E., Palmateer, N., Doyle, J. S., Hellard, M. E., & Hutchinson, S. J. (2013). Are needle and syringe programmes associated with a reduction in HIV transmission among people who inject drugs: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 43(1), 235–248. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyt243>

ⁱⁱⁱ Bernard, C. L., Owens, D. K., Goldhaber-Fiebert, J. D., & Brandeau, M. L. (2017). Estimation of the cost-effectiveness of HIV prevention portfolios for people who inject drugs in the United States: A model-based analysis. *PLOS Medicine*, 14(5). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002312>

^{iv} Platt, L., Minozzi, S., Reed, J., Vickerman, P., Hagan, H., French, C., Jordan, A., Degenhardt, L., Hope, V., Hutchinson, S., Maher, L., Palmateer, N., Taylor, A., Bruneau, J., & Hickman, M. (2017). Needle syringe programmes and opioid substitution therapy for preventing hepatitis C transmission in people who inject drugs. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2017(9). <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.cd012021.pub2>

^v Tookes, H. E., Kral, A. H., Wenger, L. D., Cardenas, G. A., Martinez, A. N., Sherman, R. L., Pereyra, M., Forrest, D. W., LaLota, M., & Metsch, L. R. (2012). A comparison of syringe disposal practices among injection drug users in a city with versus a city without needle and syringe programs. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 123(1–3), 255–259. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2011.12.001>

^{vi} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *Syringe Services Programs*. cdc.gov. <https://www.cdc.gov/syringe-services-programs/php/index.html>

^{vii} Marx, M., Crape, B., & Brookmeyer, B. (2000). Trends in crime and the introduction of a needle exchange program. *American Journal of Public Health*, 90(12), 1933–1936. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.90.12.1933>

^{viii} Galea, S., Ahern, J., Fuller, C., Freudenberg, N., & Vlahov, D. (2001). Needle exchange programs and experience of violence in an inner city neighborhood. *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 28(3), 282–288. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00042560-200111010-00014>